

A
NEW APPRAISAL
OF
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

By

JOSPH L. DUNN BURROLL

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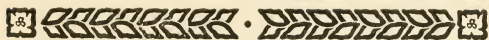
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JOSEPH DUNN BURRELL



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A NEW APPRAISAL
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CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

WITHIN forty years we have seen the rise and spread of what is known as Christian Science, which to-day has thousands of adherents,* possesses some of the handsomest edifices of worship in the land, and in no uncertain tones prophesies its ultimate conquest of the world, on the ground that it, and it alone, possesses the truth of God. The

* Dr. Carroll's latest official figures give the Christian Scientists 71,114 members.

passage of time has disclosed its character with some definiteness, and our familiarity with it makes possible a fresh appraisal.

In forming a broad estimate of it, some knowledge of its founder and the manner of its origin are indispensable.

Mary Baker was born in 1821 at the village of Bow, three miles south of Concord, New Hampshire. Her parents were people with the ordinary New England characteristics. In childhood she showed a high-wrought temperament, and was subject to hallucinations, at the age of eight declaring that she heard strange voices speaking to her. The

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family removed to Tilton, New Hampshire, eighteen miles from Concord, where Mary united with the Congregational Church at the age of twelve. There followed that period of mental and spiritual unrest which psychologists now regard as part of our natural development in the critical years when we are passing from childhood into manhood and womanhood. Those were sad years for this high-strung girl, years of great physical weakness and suffering. Part of the time she took only one meal a day, and that consisting only of bread, vegetables, and water.

During this time she acquired

in fragments a common-school education, which is said to have gone as far as physics, logic, and ethics. She says that she also took lessons of a brother, a college graduate, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Of these there are no traces in her writings, except some meager references to Latin.

At Canterbury, near Tilton, was a settlement of Shakers. They were mystics and claimed to have constant revelations from God. Their chief book was called "Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book of the United Society of Believers." For certain alleged irregularities some of these Shakers were brought to trial at Con-

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cord in November, 1848. Their counsel was Franklin Pierce, with whose office Mary Baker's lawyer brother was associated. Undoubtedly she had knowledge of these Shakers and their claim to have immediate revelations from God.

In her own history of her life, her first reference to marriage is in connection with the name of George M. Glover, to whom she was united in 1843. He died in the following year. She was now a fairly confirmed invalid, trying in turn every kind of cure known, including through a long course of years the ordinary medical treatment, homeopathy, the water cure, electricity and later on mes-

merism and spiritualism. She had, it has been said, "the sanitarium habit."

A second marriage was effected between her and a Doctor Patterson, a dentist, about 1860. This husband proved unfaithful, and eventually she secured a divorce from him. In 1861 he wrote to one Phineas P. Quimby, a Maine blacksmith, who had attained considerable celebrity as a so-called magnetic healer, from which came his title of doctor. Animal Magnetism, as it was named, was introduced to the New England mind it is thought by Charles Poyen, a Frenchman, who as early as 1837 wrote a book called "The Prog-

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ress of Animal Magnetism in New England." In this book he tells of having visited the places where Mrs. Baker was brought up. It is likely that she was familiar with the subject in girlhood, and knew its odd language even before she sought Doctor Quimby in 1861. In consulting Doctor Quimby, Doctor Patterson said his wife had been bed-ridden for six years. Quimby cured Mrs. Patterson, of course without medicine, and she was immensely grateful to him. In the official tract "Christian Science: Historical Facts," by Alfred Farlow, 1902, an attempt is made to belittle this cure. But over against this is to be set the

following testimony by Mrs. Patterson herself from the *Portland Evening Courier* in 1862: "Three weeks since I quitted my nurse and sick room *en route* for Portland. The belief of my recovery had died out of the hearts of those who were most anxious for it. With this mental and physical depression I first visited P. P. Quimby, and in less than one week from that time I ascended by a stairway of 182 steps to the dome of the City Hall and am improving *ad infinitum*."

Concerning the connection between Dr. Quimby's ideas and those of Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health" the fiercest contro-

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versy has raged. She denies in emphatic and even heated words that she derived her system or any part of it from him. But the relationship between them was very close. The manuscript copy which she made of an unpublished treatise by him is still in existence. And as late as 1868 she acted as a propagator of his system. In that year she went to Stoughton, Massachusetts, to live for a time in the home of Mrs. A. C. Wentworth, in order to teach the system to her. Dr. Quimby had the ideas and used the terms which she has since made well known. He said that his system was drawn from the Bible, and declared that

it is truth that heals. He spoke of the "Science of Health," used the term "Christian Science," and made these statements: "Truth is health," "God is principle," "matter is an error," which are among Mrs. Eddy's leading phrases. It is asserted that at the time a friend said to Dr. Quimby that Mrs. Patterson would "steal his ideas and set up for herself." But he said he did not care. Afterward he said she "had no identity in honesty," whatever that may mean.

And yet even Dr. Quimby was not the originator of these ideas and phrases. They were known earlier in the Forties through the ponderous volumes of Andrew

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Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie spiritualist and clairvoyant, which Theodore Parker is said to have pronounced the literary marvel of the Nineteenth century. Davis is now forgotten, but reference to him may be found in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and at more length in the *American Cyclopædia of Biography*. In 1845 he published "The Principles of Nature," in 1850-1861, "The Great Harmonia," in five volumes. From his "Sacred Gospels of Arabula" I copy the following: "Love, seek and speak the truth. Abhor, expose and overcome error. Cultivate health, industry, cheerfulness. Worship and obey henceforth

and forever these six principles: Love, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Beauty, and Truth." Davis called his ideas "Divine Science," and calls God "Principle."

The fact is, ideas and words of this sort were in the air when Mrs. Eddy was a girl. It can not be doubted that she took them up.

The year 1866 was marked by a serious injury to Mrs. Patterson, through a fall on the ice at Lynn. This accident gains an adventitious importance because of the connection with it of the supposed revelation of the system of Christian Science to the sufferer. And the fatal character of the accident is clearly emphasized. But the

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testimony of the physician who treated Mrs. Patterson is that he never at any time believed or said that she was in a critical condition, or that there was no hope for her. A writer in the *Psychological Review* points out that Mrs. Eddy has given four distinct and considerably divergent accounts of this experience. The first says that the patient suffered two weeks after the accident. The second says that the accident was pronounced fatal, but that the reading of Matthew ix:2 restored health by the revelation that life is the sole reality. The third account says that the recovery was by means of a demonstration that the

principle or life of man is a divine intelligence and power. The fourth, latest and fullest account from the same pen says: "I could not explain the *modus* of my relief." But after a retirement of three years for Bible study the explanation came in the form of Christian Science.

A recent official Christian Science statement by Mr. W. S. Mattox, of the C. S. Publication Committee for the State of New York, is that "Mrs. Eddy does not claim that the fundamentals of Christian Science are original with her. She says that Christian Science is Truth, the Word of God, and that it has existed forever, to be dis-

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cerned and practised. She has simply reiterated what was voiced by the long line of the prophets, culminating in the career of Jesus." This gives a somewhat new turn to her position, but it leaves unmodified the claim to have discovered or rediscovered what otherwise was unknown to her generation.

Repeatedly, in "Science and Health," it is asserted that the system of ideas therein set forth came to her as an immediate revelation from God, and that it had no connection with any contemporary person's ideas or ways of healing. Whereas the facts before us show that her method of heal-

ing without medicine, and her doctrines that go with it, and even her very phrases, were all current and were known to her. Moreover, her four accounts of the way her revelation came differ irreconcilably among themselves, and exhibit a gradual enlargement and increase in definiteness.

Must it be inferred from this that Mrs. Eddy is given to deliberate untruth? Not necessarily. But, remembering her high-wrought, nervous temperament, her prolonged and prostrating illnesses, her tendency to hallucinations, her saturation for years with all kinds of strange and mystical teachings, it is scarcely possible

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that her own account of what happened to her more than a generation ago should escape coloring from her own feelings, meditations, and desires. In other words, she is not a valuable witness on things concerning herself. She is not the only example of the kind by any means. The type is a fairly common one. In all such cases, leaving the question of moral obliquity aside, it is necessary that we should stand by the facts rather than by the account of them given by the party most interested, and for that very reason least capable of giving an uncolored presentation of them.

The next year after her second

cure, she began to teach healing without medicine. In 1870 her ideas appeared in pamphlet form. In 1875 the first edition of "Science and Health" appeared. Since then it has gone through repeated corrections, a fact to be considered in view of the assertion that at the start it was a direct revelation from God. One would scarcely suppose that a divine revelation would need correction.

In 1877 she was married to Dr. Asa G. Eddy, who died in 1882. In 1881 a healing school was opened in Boston, and called the "Metaphysical College." It had seven thousand pupils in seven years. Later Mrs. Eddy became

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pastor of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, and editor of the *Christian Science Journal*. In 1889 she retired from public view to the seclusion of her home in Concord. Attention has been called frequently to the fact that the Christian Science movement has been enormously profitable financially. It is said that in all Mrs. Eddy has had three thousand personal pupils whom she charged three hundred dollars apiece for her course of study. "Science and Health" has been sold to the number of more than three hundred and fifty thousand, at from three to five dollars a copy. From these two sources alone she

has derived over a million and a half dollars. Mrs. Eddy's followers defend her by citing the Biblical saying, "the laborer is worthy of his hire." But this has always been supposed to mean no more than that it is right and proper that he who gives his whole time to the work of the Gospel should have his earthly needs met by those whom he serves. It has never been thought that it gave license to the desire to obtain wealth. What the apostles thought of that sort of degradation of religion we see in the story of Simon Magus. The Christian world has always judged that the Christian worker who uses his office to get rich dis-

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honors his Master who made Himself poor for our sake. But it may be said that Mrs. Eddy's case ought rather to be compared with that of our famous physicians and their large incomes. But one difference is here : that no physician claims to be the only revealer in our day of God's truth to men. That was an extraordinary state of mind, to put it in the mildest form, which permitted one to claim the monopoly of truth and then, instead of using every method to give it out freely for the benefit of humanity, after the manner of Christ and His apostles, to dole it out with the shrewd bargaining spirit of the stock market. Chris-

tian Science has scarcely taken for its motto, "freely ye have received, freely give."

And here it ought to be said that one of the most remarkable things about Mrs. Eddy, which is, in no small degree, the cause of the success of Christian Science, is her practical shrewdness, which has led her to incorporate her system of ideas in institutional form. First of all, there is the book, the reading of which is one of the modes of cure. Then there is the construction of certain specific formulas or prayers, which are to be used in a prescribed method in cases of sickness. Then there is the literature, in book and maga-

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zine form, which constitutes an aggressive propaganda. Then there is the actual erection of special edifices for the services of the cult, which, of itself, gives it a certain definiteness and stability.

Above all these, there is the elaborated organization of the church in all its branches, every detail prescribed, every officer and his duties named and restricted, with Mrs. Eddy herself as the supreme head, having absolute power to do whatever seems to her best in the government of the society, without check from any committee or council of any sort. It is singular that in this democratic age, when government by the people is the

watchword of all social progress, there should have sprung up in America, the land *par excellence* of democracy, a social institution of a religious sort, constituted upon strictly monarchical lines, and more autocratic than the Salvation Army, the Order of Jesuits, or even the Papacy itself.

We have now before us the facts of Mrs. Eddy's life, the history of the origin of her ideas, and the methods by which they have been exploited. It is only too plain that a careful consideration of this evidence is distinctly damaging to her claims. Surely it is not in such an uncertain moral atmosphere as this that we are likely to

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get a comprehension of the eternal verities.

Passing on from these considerations, let us now form an estimate of the ideas of Christian Science on their own merits. The most concise statement of them is contained in the creed of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston. Here it is: "First, as adherents of Truth, we take the inspired word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal life. Second, we acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God ; we acknowledge one Christ—His Son Christ Jesus ; the Holy Ghost as the divine Comforter ; and man His divine image and

likeness. Third, we acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin, and in the understanding that evil and sin are unreal, hence not eternal. But the belief in sin is punished, so long as it lasts. Fourth, we acknowledge Christ's atonement as the evidence of divine and efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Jesus Christ the Way-shower. Fifth, we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ—through divine Truth, Life, and Love—demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in the healing of the sick and the overcoming of sin and death. Also, that the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrec-

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tion were designed to elevate human faith and understanding to the spiritual perception of the eternal existence of the good and the real in man. Sixth, we solemnly promise to strive, watch, and pray for that Mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus ; to love one another, and to be meek, merciful, just, and pure."

As we read these words it is evident that, to most of them, all Christians give hearty assent. Can it be that we are all Christian Scientists without knowing it? One is tempted to ask why Christian Science has left our churches, where most of these things are taught, and set up a new church

of its own, a course which is obviously inconsistent with the increasing tendency toward closer fellowship, and even union among the churches of our day.

But as we go deeper into Christian Science we find that while it uses words with which we are all familiar, it puts new and strange meanings into them. It is certainly open to just criticism at this point. Of course, its advocates can define words to suit themselves. But that all may be sincere and above board, they surely ought not to allow the impression to exist that their ideas are those of Christians in general, merely because they use the familiar words.

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Either it agrees with us or it does not. If it does, it should not have left the Christian Church. If it does not, it is scarcely honest for its authorized lecturers to give out the impression that it does. Is it quite honorable for their chief platform representative to read off the broadest sections of their creed and appeal to us if we do not agree with them, when he knows that he does not mean by them what we do? This looks suspiciously like a trap to catch the unwary. Surely, in dealing with such a solemn business as religion, scrupulous sincerity is the first requisite.

It becomes necessary for us, therefore, to go back of the Chris-

tian Science creed to inquire more fully as to its meaning. This is authoritatively given in "Science and Health."

A condensed statement therein given is as follows: that "all real being is in the divine mind and idea; that Life, Truth, and Love are all-powerful and ever-present; that the opposite of Truth—called error, sin, sickness, disease, death—is a false testimony of false material sense; that this false sense evolves, in belief, a subjective state of mortal mind, which this same mind calls *matter*, thereby shutting out the true sense of the Spirit."

Here are the so-called fundamental propositions: "1. God is

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all in all. 2. God is good—Good is Mind. 3. God, Spirit, being all, nothing is matter. 4. Life, God, omnipotent good, deny death, evil, sin, disease.—Disease, sin, evil, death, deny Good, omnipotent God, Life.”

Going more into detail we find the following positions: 1. Concerning God. God is everywhere, is wholly loving and has all power. “God is not person.” He is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost it is true, but these three are Truth, Life and Love, respectively.

2. Concerning man. Man is a reflection of the universal Intelligence. “The Science of Being

reveals man as perfect, even as the Father is perfect; because the Soul, or Mind, of man is God." He is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, like God the Father.

3. Concerning the world. There is nothing material, because the only reality is Spirit.

4. Concerning trouble. As God is the only reality, and God is good, and evil can not come from good, it is impossible that evil should be. And in fact it does not exist. It is only the imagination of man's mortal mind. There is no sin, nor pain, nor disease, nor death. We only dream such things. "They are only false beliefs."

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5. Concerning man's privilege. He lives in God, and it is his right to assert truth, goodness and life against their opposites, and so make the real exclude the false. We should overcome sin, sickness and death, by asserting their non-existence, or rather the existence of God, when we find that our imagination of them vanishes and we are free from them. "They expect to overcome evil by denying it any existence." (Mattox.)

Now let us inquire by what method the endeavor to establish these ideas is made. The claim is that it is double, scientific, and Biblical.

Is it scientific in the ordinary

sense? "What is Science? Is it not the orderly arrangement of ascertained facts; is it not knowing something; is not that the root meaning of the word?" (Mattox.) In this confusion of knowledge with science we have a fair illustration of the Christian Scientists' loose and inexact way of using words. Possibly science might in a general way be called "knowing something," but "knowing something" assuredly is not necessarily science. "Are there no ascertained facts about God which constitute Science, the Science of all existence, the Science of all sciences?" "Jesus knew something definite about God and

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His everlasting laws, about His perfect creation. What He knew was Science, by every test which can be applied to that word." (Do.) Expressions like these indicate how far the Christian Scientist is from a comprehension of the current meaning of the term science. In fact, the spelling of the word science in the passages quoted always with a capital letter indicates that he is giving a peculiar esoteric meaning to the word: what he always means is Christian Science. It is this sort of double play on words that raises a feeling of insincerity in dealing with Christian Science arguments.

If we use the word science in Mrs. Eddy's own peculiar sense to designate her special attitude toward the truth, in that sense and that sense only, is the method scientific. Careless or half-informed readers looking into "Science and Health" and seeing there the claim that this and that statement are "scientifically demonstrated" may fancy that here is something to be set beside the work of Newton, Faraday, Darwin, and Huxley. Such is not the fact. Of the scientist's careful and long training of the mind, his exhaustive knowledge of history, his minute and vast observation of facts, his cautious inductions, there

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is nothing in Mrs. Eddy's book. Neither in natural ability nor education has she capacity in this direction. And, in fact, denying the existence of matter, it is plain that to her what we ordinarily call science is impossible, since the materials for it do not exist. It is unfortunate that the word science should have been used in connection with the system of "Divine Healing," as it is certain to mislead.

And what of Mrs. Eddy's Biblical method? For she maintains that her ideas are based on the Bible. As we read we discover interpretations of Biblical passages such as have never been met with before. The question is raised at

once, is she entitled to put these meanings into the Holy Scriptures. Christian Scientists say in self-defense that they merely claim the right to read the Bible for themselves. Can any one deny them that right? Assuredly not. But neither they nor any one else have any moral right to give to the Bible any other meaning than that which belongs to it. And what is that? The meaning it had to those for whom it was written in the first place. The Bible is a deep book, for it deals with deep subjects; but it is also a simple book; it must be so in the nature of the case, for it was meant for the common people. The simplest mean-

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ing therefore is likely to be the correct one.

To be sure, all kinds of meanings have been ascribed to the Bible by different interpreters, and consequently many types of Christianity have come into existence. Bossuet held that Protestantism could not be true because of its divisions, and Christian Science uses the same argument. "There are about 700 different religious sects, each claiming to understand and practise the teachings of Jesus Christ, and each of them differs more or less from all the others." The founder of each of these sects did just what Mrs. Eddy claims the right to do: "he based his

creed on his interpretation of the Bible." (Mattox.)

But it is to be said in reply that no matter what fantastic interpretations of the Bible have obtained in ages past (Origen's, for example, which go beyond Mrs. Eddy's on her own lines), to-day there is substantial agreement in the Christian world as to the correct method of interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and as to their meaning. It agrees that Mrs. Eddy's method is defunct and impossible. Her method of interpreting the Bible is allegorical. She does not take words in their plain sense, but gives them a fanciful meaning of her own. Adam is

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not merely a man's name, its true meaning is error. Angels are not beings of a class superior to men, they are good thoughts. Canaan means a sensuous belief. Dan means animal magnetism. Dove is a symbol of Divine Science. Jerusalem means mortal belief. And so on indefinitely. The following is the manner in which this method of interpretation deals with the story of Jacob wrestling with the angel: "Jacob was alone, wrestling with error, struggling with the mortal sense of life, substance, and intelligence as existent in matter with its false pleasure and pains, when an angel, a message from Truth and Love, ap-

peared to him and smote the sinew, or strength, his error, till it became powerless; and thereby Truth, being understood, gave him spiritual strength in this Peniel of Divine Science." As we are bound to believe that the object of language is to reveal thought, not to conceal it, it is difficult to think that the story of Jacob was ever meant to convey any such erratic ideas as those indicated.

See what Mrs. Eddy makes of the Lord's Prayer by this method. Here is the interlinear interpretation of that prayer which is read every Sunday in connection with it in every Christian Science church:

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“ Adorable One.

Thy Kingdom is come; good is ever-present and omnipotent.

Enable us to know—as in Heaven, so on earth—God is all in all.

Give us grace for to-day ; feed thou the famished affections ;

And divine Love is reflected in love ;

And leadeth us not in temptation, but delivereth us from evil, sin, disease, and death.

For God is omnipresent Good, the only Substance, Life, Truth, and Love.”

When our Savior taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer is it conceivable that he did not know what he meant Himself and that thereafter nobody else ever knew until Mrs. Eddy told us? It is incredible. Not an angel from heaven could convince us that Christ was

mistaken in putting his tenses into the future, and that they should all be turned into presents. To tamper with the words of our Lord, change them in our own interest and make them mean what He did not mean at all by them if there is any honesty in speech, would seem to the average Christian something very like sacrilege.

Passing from Mrs. Eddy's methods to her ideas, it is to be said that her system belongs under the philosophic head of idealism, that is, the theory that there is no reality but thought. This theory, of course, is not original with her. It goes back to the early ages of human life. It first appeared in

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India where it survives in Buddhism which teaches that all that we see about us is illusion—Maya. It was perpetuated and developed in the Neo-Platonists of the early Christian centuries. Two hundred years ago it came into view in the writings of Bishop Berkeley. But pure idealism has never won a very extensive conquest among men. Nor is it ever likely to do so permanently, even in the form of Christian Science. For the ordinary man will believe his senses. He is perfectly aware that they are not infallible, he knows that they sometimes deceive. But his experience, which agrees with that of his fellow men,

assures him that on the whole they are trustworthy and sufficiently competent as a working guide for daily living. He says to himself, "If I can not believe my own eyes, what can I believe? And if God did not want me to believe them, why did he permit me to have them and, indeed, make them Himself, as the Bible says He did? Can it be that God created me and set me here and abandoned me to disastrous illusion? I do not believe it." Nor do we, nor will men ever generally. Mrs. Eddy says that all this world which is revealed to us by the senses is a dream. But Kant said well, "a dream which all dream together,

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and which all *must* dream, is not a dream, but reality."

Mrs. Eddy's theology belongs under the head of pantheism, the doctrine that God is everything that is. She has recently objected to this classification, but while repudiating the name she retains the thing itself. She teaches that God alone has reality, and denies it to all that is antagonistic to God, including sin, sickness, and death. Is this the teaching of the Bible? Far from it. Sin, we are taught, is so real that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world to die for its destruction. As another has said: "What becomes of the atonement, when suffering which

was not suffering, in a body which was not a body, was offered in expiation for sin which was not sin?" Surely if words mean anything, in that matter of the atonement we are dealing with stupendous realities.

But how could God, being good, permit sin, sickness, and death to come into His world? Mrs. Eddy gets around that by denying that they are here. But she only pushes the difficulty one step farther back, for now the question is raised, how God, being love, could permit men to imagine sin, sickness, and death. She has nothing to say to that. In fact, there is nothing to say. After all, she is no better off than the rest of us. For whether sin,

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sickness, and death are realities or imaginations, in any case they are here, and the question of their permission by a good God is still to be explained.

When we examine the practical workings of this system of ideas we find that many express themselves, some with great enthusiasm, as having received benefit from it. The reasons of this success are given officially as follows: "First, the restoration of the Christian healing of the apostolic church; second, the establishment of Christianity on a scientific and practically demonstrable basis; third, the metaphysical and spiritual interpretation of Christ's

teaching, representing a general and world-wide reaction against materialism and externalism in religion."

First, in the department of healing, Christian Science claims that it, or more exactly, Christ working through it, cures all diseases by destroying the mortal imagination which makes them seem real. This claim is based on Christ's well-known command to the apostles to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." Christian Science professes to obey this command literally. Of course it is noted at once that it does not raise the dead. The head lecturer of the First

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Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, unhesitatingly retreats at this point, declaring that the word dead here is to be taken figuratively, referring to those who are "dead in trespasses and sins." Other Christian Scientists take the position that Christian Science is as yet only in its beginnings, but that the time will come when it will literally raise the dead. Of course, there is no way of proving or disproving such a claim. But whichever of these two ways out of this difficulty is employed, plainly the issue is evaded. Christian Science does not fulfil its claim to keep this command of Christ literally.

In the matter of healing it has certainly achieved some remarkable results. There is no reason why its successes should not be frankly admitted.

On the other hand, there is no reason why it should not admit its failures. Formerly it refused to do so. But the facts have been too much for it, and it has changed on this point; to-day failures are admitted. But they are usually ascribed to some defect in mental attitude somewhere in the family connection or the neighborhood. This strikes the outsider as a subterfuge. For some such defect can always be found by looking far enough. And even when con-

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ditions are as favorable as possible, failure constantly ensues. Christian Science defends itself by challenging comparison between its degree of success and that of the ordinary physicians. This is obviously an abandonment of its high ground. Formerly it claimed absolutely to cure everything; now it only claims to do better than the doctors. But even this is only a claim. There is no sufficient evidence for it. Of course testimonials can be secured by the ream. The latest Christian Science pamphlet, "Christian Science and Legislation," contains twenty-five pages of testimonies from people who say they have been healed.

These are really not worth the paper they are printed on, as real evidence. It is not by such unanalyzed and uncorroborated statements as these that truth is established. The fact is, that while Christian Science does effect cures within certain limits, it can not be depended on. Probably every reader of these lines can recall numbers of cases of people who hoped for help from Christian Science and went straight down to death, while some "healer" stood by assuring them that they were well. The world is as it is, and if Christian Science can not work its cures where it finds itself, then it is of little use. It is not stretch-

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ing the truth to say that "a succession of fatalities follows this movement as a black shadow."
(Parmele.)

Christian Science has a natural explanation. Physiologists ascribe it to autosuggestion. It belongs with a class of cures running back through all centuries, and found in all countries, due to the power, limited but real, which the mind has over the body. Plato, for example, knew and recognized it. By saying that it is natural, we do not deny that God works in it, for God is in all things. But by saying that it is natural, we mean that God works in it along ordinary lines and according to the laws

which He has established. At the shrine of Lourdes, in France, and at that of Saint Anne de Beaupré, near Quebec, the Christian Science cures are abundantly duplicated. In all cases the explanation is the same.

The second reason alleged for the success of Christian Science, "the establishment of Christianity on a scientific and practically demonstrable basis," is not a reason to one who uses words carefully. For Christian Science, as we have seen, has not an atom of the scientific in it, nor has it even approached a demonstration of its truth, if the words science and demonstration are used, not in an

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esoteric, but in their common meaning.

The third reason is well founded. Christian Science has helped many people to rise above care and worry, sickness and sorrow, by throwing themselves on the love of God. It is sure that there are some troubles God does not purpose that we should escape, at least in this world. The fact that nobody escapes them, not even the Christian Scientists, shows that, and the denial of them seems to have in it a note of insincerity. But there are many troubles which we bear needlessly. Christian Science here sets us a worthy example. It reminds us that we have a

God who is ready to help us in every hour of need. It offers something spiritual, mystical, quieting, which is novel as a revelation from Heaven to some who have had a superficial and formal religion. In Christian Science such people have caught a glimpse of the spiritual side of religion. That they did not find this in the church shows, perhaps, negligence there, certainly failure on their own part to make the most of their privileges. For it is needless to say that spiritual religion is nobody's monopoly, but is always to be found by such as are hungry for it.

But even on the side where it

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has had some desert of success, Christian Science exposes itself to two just criticisms. The first is that holding the idea that perfect happiness comes by the elimination of trouble, especially sickness, it has no place for the heroic element in character. For while there is no benefit to be secured by directly seeking trouble, and while it is natural and right for us to escape trouble as far as possible, yet to accept it when it becomes inevitable, and to endure it manfully, brings out the very best there is in us. If trial were not here, this world would not be half as glorious a place to live in as it is. Christian Science has no recog-

nition of this fact. It has no sympathy, for example, with the sentiment of such lines as the following, which have brought comfort to thousands in the midst of the stress and storm of life :

“I can not say
Beneath the pressure of life’s cares to-day,
I joy in these;
But I can say
That I had rather walk this rugged way
If Him it please.

“I can not feel
That all is well, when darkening clouds conceal
The shining sun;
But then I know
God lives and loves; and say, since it is so,
‘Thy will be done.’

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“ I can not speak
In happy tones; tear-drops on my cheek
 Show I am sad;
 But I can speak
Of grace to suffer, with submission meek,
 Until made glad.

“ I do not see
Why God should e'en permit some things to
 be,
 When He is love;
 But I can see
Though often dimly, through a mystery,
 His hand above.”

The other criticism is that Christian Science as a movement is not with the great philanthropies of the world. In “Science and Health” Mrs. Eddy shows an undisguised hardness toward the poor. And those who have Christian Science friends must have

been shocked many a time by their careful avoidance of places where anything painful might be met, and their indifference to the common troubles of other people. This is naturally involved in their position that trouble has no reality. The result, tho undesigned, looks perilously like selfishness. Each Christian Scientist seems pretty much bent on looking after his own welfare.

In later years, it is true, the naturally humane feeling of the heart has reasserted itself, and the philanthropic spirit is recognized in two ways, by voluntarily giving "treatments" for those in trouble, sometimes in presence, sometimes

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in absence, and by offering these "treatments" free in hospitals and asylums and in the slums.

In later years also, it is said, Mrs. Eddy has been in the habit of giving away personally the munificent sum of about \$80,000 annually "to miscellaneous and undenominational charities. She supplies hundreds of pairs of shoes each winter to the poor children of her native city of Concord, New Hampshire, gives to hospitals and churches (other than Christian Science churches), and in other ways exhibits a practical charity which is truly Christian." (Mattox.)

Assuredly we should rejoice in

these things. Yet amiable as is their inconsistency with the system of "Science and Health," it must be pointed out that it is an inconsistency. To denounce drugs, surgery and doctors, as well as the teachings of the Christian churches, and then to give money for their support, would seem to indicate that the denunciation was never really sincere, or that Mrs. Eddy's mind has changed. The ingenious defense has been worked out, that if people *will* not be Christian Scientists, and *will* follow old religious and medical ideas, then for such incorrigibles probably their false beliefs are better than nothing at all, and may prop-

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erly be supported in a degree by Mrs. Eddy. But this is mere trifling. If Mrs. Eddy is sure that she has the eternal truth of God, while the rest of us are believing lies, it is immoral in her to support us in our belief.

From what has been said already it is obvious that Christian Science is not in all things just what it was say twenty years ago. As it has gone along on its career, like all things human, it has experienced change. To-day it is less self-contradictory than it used to be, and concedes more to universally accepted ideas. It has trimmed to weather the fierce blasts of criticism it has had to meet.

One fundamental fault, however, always persists and seems to be an inevitable accompaniment of it in all its exponents; a hazy, inexact, and shifting quality of both thought and speech. Tho one may point out self-contradictions in it, they seem to mean nothing to its advocates, who always reply with some fresh nebulosity. For example, Mrs. Eddy denies that the physical senses of man have reality. But in the *Christian Science Journal* (June, 1904), we read: "It has been asked, Do you mean to say that this wonderful piece of mechanism called the body is an illusion, and that all the beautiful things in nature are but myths?"

[sic]. We answer, such is not the teaching of Christian Science.” “Mrs. Eddy teaches that the senses of man are spiritual.” For the moment let us stick to one term and speak of one thing: the *physical* senses of man. As *physical* are they reality or illusion? If the latter (as Mrs. Eddy teaches), why try to get the benefit of claiming disingenuously that Christian Science holds to their reality, when the writer knows that he is speaking not of *physical* but of spiritual senses? Samples of this sort of vagueness and inconsequentiality in Christian Science arguments might be cited indefinitely.

Already some followers of Chris-

tian Science have left it, thrown aside some of the most glaring of its inconsistencies, and written books giving the substance of the system with a clearness and consistency beyond Mrs. Eddy's capacity. Naturally she protests against such unauthorized expositions. "Plagiarism," she says, "from my writings is so common it is becoming odious to honest people; and such compilations, instead of possessing the essentials of Christian Science, are tempting and misleading." (In passing we may note the singularity of this protest in connection with the relation between Mrs. Eddy and Dr. Quimby.) And re-

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cently one of Mrs. Eddy's official advocates has said : " There is no teacher of Christian Science, no lecturer, no writer for its periodicals who ever uttered anything of value concerning this Science and its practise, who did not in so doing, cross and recross the same ground which Mrs. Eddy covered in a better way, many years before." But in spite of all such protests, and the iron-clad provisions of the Christian Science church to prevent change, change has come and will come still more.

Undoubtedly Christian Science has been held together somewhat by the personal devotion of many of its followers to " The Mother."

A few years ago this devotion became so extreme in its language and actions that Mrs. Eddy herself saw that it was time to call a halt. The existence of a living leader, claiming to be with Christ the great revealer of religion to mankind, has supplied that personal element which has meant so much in great religious movements, without regard to their merits. What will happen when Mrs. Eddy dies no one can, at present, easily foresee.

Looking over the voluminous contributions of Christian Science to religious literature, one can not but be impressed with its extraordinary defects: its essential misun-

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derstanding of the thought of the world which it assumes to supplement, its ignorance of all that modern culture stands for, its infantile logic, its offensive pretentiousness, its slippery casuistry. It is incredible that anybody should seriously believe in the survival, much more the ultimate universality, of a system which affronts intelligence so deeply at almost every point, for there is at its root an essential denial of God in its refusal to recognize Him in His works, and perhaps an even more radical denial of Him in its refusal to recognize Him in the age-long thinking of humanity.

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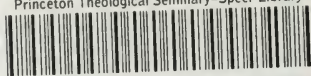
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